

What is claimed is:

1. A method of converting a full color image to a two color image for a thermal printer, wherein said two colors are a primary color and a secondary color, comprising:

- providing a color image on a host computer as display pixels, wherein said color image includes a combination of none, one, two, or all three of a first color, a second color, and a third color;
- converting each pixel to a corresponding printer command;
- determining a primary color value and a secondary color value for each of said printer commands based on an intensity of said first color, said second color, and said third color present in said pixel;
- comparing each of said primary and secondary color values for each printer command to a given threshold and designating a color value as ON if it exceeds a given threshold, and designating a color value as OFF if it is below or equal to said given threshold;
- performing a logical OR operation on said primary and secondary color values to produce a secondary value;
- loading said secondary value into a secondary print buffer;
- printing nothing if said secondary value is OFF and printing said secondary color if said secondary value is ON;
- loading said primary color value into a primary print buffer; and
- printing said primary color if said primary color value is ON.

2. A method according to claim 1, wherein said first, second, and third colors are red, green, and blue, in any order.

3. A method according to claim 1, wherein said first, second, and third colors are cyan, magenta, and yellow, in any order.

1 4. An apparatus for converting a full color image to a two color image for a thermal
2 printer, wherein said two colors are a primary color and a secondary color,
3 comprising:

4 means for providing a color image on a host computer as display pixels,
5 wherein said color image includes a combination of none, one, two, or all three of a
6 first color, a second color, and a third color;

7 means for converting each pixel to a corresponding printer command;

8 means for determining a first color value, a second color value, and a third
9 color value for each of said printer commands based on an intensity of said first color,
10 said second color, and said third color present in said pixel;

11 means for comparing each of first, second, and third color values for each
12 printer command to a given threshold and designating a color value as ON if it
13 exceeds a given threshold, and designating a color value as OFF if it is below or equal
14 to said given threshold;

15 means for performing a logical OR operation on said primary and secondary
16 color values to produce a secondary value;

17 means for loading said secondary value into a secondary print buffer;

18 means for printing nothing if said secondary value is OFF and printing said
19 secondary color if said secondary value is ON;

20 means for loading said primary color value into a primary print buffer; and

21 means for printing said primary color if said primary color value is ON.

1 5. An apparatus according to claim 4, wherein said first, second, and third colors are
2 red, green, and blue, in any order.

1 6. An apparatus according to claim 4, wherein said first, second, and third colors are
2 cyan, magenta, and yellow, in any order.